DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 221 640 UD 022 536

TITLE Successful School Series.
INSTITUTION New Jersey State Dept. of Education, Trenton. Div. of Research, Planning, and Evaluation.
PUB DATE 82
NOTE 70p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; *Administrator Characteristics; Basic Skills; Community Involvement; *Educational Environment; Elementary Education; Inservice Teacher Education; *Institutional Characteristics; Parent School Relationship; Public Schools; Reading Programs; *School Effectiveness; Secondary Education; Student Attitudes; Supplementary Education; Teacher Characteristics; *Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *New Jersey

ABSTRACT

Nine public schools in New Jersey, eight of which are in urban areas, are separately described as samples of schools with a high level of student achievement in the basic skills, and with demographic characteristics that are similar to those of schools with serious achievement problems. Eight elementary schools and one high school are included in this report. Each narrative report, written by an outside observer, describes the general school environment and focuses on elements characteristic of the school that are thought to be related to the school's success: the principal, his leadership characteristics and relations with teachers and students; teacher characteristics; educational programs and teaching approaches, especially in reading and the basic skills; staff support; extracurricular activities; and parent and community involvement in school activities. Summary profiles provided for each school present information on total and minority enrollment, average daily attendance rate, expense budget, and proportion of students who met minimum basic skills standards in 1981. Also included are lists of the staff of each school. (MJL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED221640

The Successful School Series

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Constance O'Dea
New Jersey Dept. of Ed.
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Gustav H. Ruh
Acting Commissioner

Prepared under the Direction of the
Division of Research, Planning and Evaluation

Rita Carney
Assistant Commissioner

Evelyn Ogden
Deputy Assistant Commissioner

New Jersey State Department of Education

MAY 1982

UD 022 536

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

S. David Brandt, President.....Cherry Hill

Susan N. Wilson, Vice President.....Princeton

Jack Bagan.....Salem City

Betty Dean.....East Orange

Mateo F. DeCardenas.....Union City

Anne S. Dillman.....Perth Amboy

James Jones.....Teaneck

John T. Klagholz.....Seaside Park

Ruth H. Mancuso.....Glassboro

Katherine Neuberger.....Lincroft
(Representative, State Board of Higher Education)

P. Paul Ricci.....Vineland

Sonia B. Ruby.....Atlantic City

Robert J. Wolfenbarger.....Summit

Secretary

Gustav H. Ruh
Acting Commissioner of Education

Ex Officio

T. Edward Hollander
Chancellor of Higher Education

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
225 WEST STATE STREET
TRENTON N. J. 08625

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

In a period when the effectiveness of public schooling is being questioned, I am pleased to report on schools that are achieving at a high level despite potential obstacles. These are the schools described in the "Successful Schools Series," of which this report is a part.

During the school year 1980-81, more than one hundred urban schools with basic skills deficiencies were examined in detail through the use of a review instrument which was based on hundreds of research studies concerned with effective schools. In order to test the success factors used in that review instrument and to learn more about the practices of successful schools, a study was conducted of a sample of New Jersey schools with a record of high achievement in the basic skills.

Of the many schools which were identified as successful in the basic skills, nine were selected for the study. Selection was based upon the successful schools' similarity in demographic factors to the schools with serious achievement problems. The research team matched schools by community type (inner city, suburban, etc.), per pupil expenditure, percent of minority group population, socio-economic status of the district, grades served and total enrollment. The criterion for success was that more than 85 percent of the students had met the state standards for basic skills achievement for three years, with a stable or improving trend.

Eight of the nine selected schools were urban, and faced many of the same obstacles to success that the schools with severe achievement problems faced; but, they were able to overcome those obstacles and maintain high student achievement, low levels of violence and vandalism, and strong parental involvement.

How these schools achieved such success is the basis for the Successful School series. Each of the nine schools is described in a separate report. I feel it is important to share their successes with other educators, parents and members of the community. I hope that by our sharing this information, other schools can profit by their example, and that students throughout the state will benefit.

Gustav H. Ruh
Acting Commissioner

Written by

Daniel W. Kunz
Bureau of Planning

"GOING TO GEORGE WASHINGTON IS LIKE OWNING A PIECE OF THE ROCK"

What is it like attending a successful urban elementary school? Structure, high expectations, positive attitudes of teachers and strong curriculum are all there, but the students actually say it best..."Going to George Washington is like owning a piece of the rock." Those students know that their school works for them and is the rock on which they will build a successful future.

The students' pride and enthusiasm are matched by the interest and expectations of the faculty and staff. All are proud of the fifty year-old building and its programs. Over a period of approximately 10 years, this urban area, composed largely of single-family houses and old-style garden apartments, has experienced a total change in population. The school serves a large minority population which emphasizes high expectations and attitudes. The faculty expects excellence and ultimately gets it. The residents of Hillside, barely two blocks from New Jersey's largest city and bordered by industry and major highways, also maintain and support high expectations for their children. The school's support staff is quick to point out that vandalism is minimal and that what there is occurs when the building is open to outside groups for evening recreation programs. Pride, caring and success all seem to be pieces of the rock.

Supported by a reading specialist and a part-time teacher/administrative intern, the principal is a dominant figure in this kindergarten through eighth grade school. He sets clear expectations for the teachers, and all staff as professionals are accountable for the results of their efforts. He enjoys talking about the many successful ideas the teachers and students have developed, and the enthusiasm with which he praises the faculty and programs is contagious. The relaxed yet structured atmosphere of the building is at least in part set by his open door policy. He enjoys talking with teachers about both new ideas and problems. More importantly, he prefers to discuss ways of remedying those problems and increasing achievement and student motivation.

Often found in the classroom or the halls, the principal likes to be in touch with the day-to-day happenings in the building. He will take both lunchroom and classroom duties to be sure he has a feel for the climate of the school. His daily presence is also thought to be one reason for the well disciplined nature of the student body.

A very positive esprit de corps exists among the teachers at Washington School. Their talk is usually focused on the curriculum, the students' needs and how they can share ideas and pool efforts to increase learning. Possibly their closeness evolves from the commonly held belief that all children can achieve, or that they all sincerely care about the children, or that they hold high expectations, or that they are highly skilled in their chosen occupation. Regardless of the reason, this very cohesive working group earns considerable respect from the students, the administration, and the parents.

The faculty as a whole exhibit strong classroom management as a major tool in working with children. Part of this management is careful analysis of Minimum Basic Skills (MBS) test results and the matching of a child's needs with very specific and attainable skills exercises which are obtained from an extensive teacher-developed skills bank. Sharing of ideas and a willingness to acknowledge another teacher's better ideas are characteristics of the teachers' grade level preparation periods.

Supplemental instruction in Title I, Compensatory Education and enrichment programs is provided on a pull-out basis. Each program, however, is coordinated by the reading specialist who identifies a student's needs, selects appropriate instructional strategies and then trains the teacher in the use of those strategies. Further, she checks all teacher materials, plans, and lessons prior to their use. If a discrepancy exists between the classroom teacher's approach and a supplemental teacher's approach, the problem is immediately rectified. An open door approach encourages this type of problem-solving. The negative effects of pull-out are minimized by this centrally orchestrated program and the students gain from a very well coordinated effort. Further, all teachers in the building work from the same skills array and reading continuums so that the student's needs and progress are being constantly monitored and strengthened regardless of what classroom the child is in.

To support these efforts and increase their effectiveness, the teachers frequently conduct mini-inservice sessions and share their ideas and approaches freely. Each teacher has a particular subject area specialty as a focus and is then a resource person to others in that area. This flexibility encourages sharing and insures the maximum benefit to each child.

The rock at Washington School is unquestionably reading. All programs and activities emphasize reading skills and the need to master these skills. The reading program is structured and carefully sequenced and is the core of all regular and special subjects and supplemental activities. Not only does the principal have an excellent reading specialist but the principal's own background in reading and his willingness to encourage inservice workshops in this area have helped emphasize the importance of reading. The very comprehensive nature of the reading program and continued high teacher expectations are among the prime reasons for dramatic increases in the reading ability of the students during the principal's six-year tenure in this school. A house built on a rock will stand forever.

Although basic skills, and particularly reading, are emphasized, none of the other subjects are neglected. In fact, the emphasis on reading provides a solid foundation for taking students beyond the basics in all subjects. Reading frees students to become involved with learning in all areas. The discipline necessary to work in a structured program is carried over to the students' study habits. The children are taught the skills needed to be self-directed and organized. This structured approach extends into the classroom, where teacher-directed methods predominate, although differentiated instructional tactics that fit the subject and learning styles are emphasized. Even kindergarteners are exposed to a structured environment and an academic program, in addition to learning to master social and adjustment skills. Teachers strongly emphasize a student's self-worth and ability to achieve in all classes, and they hold high academic expectations for each child. Constant reminders of those expectations are found on posters and bulletin boards and the teachers' verbal encouragement in each classroom.

Support for the classroom teacher is provided by the guidance counselor and the librarian. Career awareness is emphasized by using community resource persons. Students are therefore exposed to numerous possible occupations during the school year. The librarian supports this program with special reading and activities. In addition, the library is used in both open and scheduled approaches so that student needs are met.

Projects and programs are central to the activities that occur at Washington School. Student council, dress-up day, career days, and other extra curricular activities are an integral part of a student's life. To emphasize the importance of these extra curricular activities and show how they are related to academic achievement, academic achievement standards exist for participation in each activity. The students see this as a reward for success, which they feel they earn.

Teachers, parents, and students know what is going on in the school and what is planned. Newsletters, calendars, and numerous flyers are sent home to announce special events. Communication is encouraged and teachers frequently call a student's parents to discuss the student's progress or a problem. The community is not highly involved nor active with PTA activities, but parents will come to the school if necessary even if it means missing work. The PTA executive board is actively seeking ways to involve more parents in school activities. The teachers try to work with the parents by scheduling early morning, afternoon, or even evening meetings and phone calls if that is necessary. Parents are involved in a special project if their children are in any grade between kindergarten and 4th grade -- PITCH: Parents Involved in Teaching Children at Home -- helps parents supplement and support in-school instructional programs. Judging by the number of parents involved and the interest the program has been able to maintain, the activity seems to be highly successful.

The parents and community are made to feel welcome and comfortable due largely to the efforts of the school secretary and aides. The secretary makes special efforts to tell all parents on their first visit about the schools procedures and what they can expect from the school. She also lets the parents know about how they can help the school and their children through involvement in school activities. Teacher aides also provide an invaluable link to the community. They assist in the office, lunchroom and library and are the nucleus of the PTA. The custodians are quite proud, and justfiably so, of their efforts to provide everyone with safe and pleasant surroundings in which to learn.

This school is as solid as the rock the students referred to. Upon that rock is built an educational program that is well-structured and sound, is orchestrated by a principal who is well versed in educational programs, and is supported by an exceptional reading specialist who has developed and maintains a highly effective program. The teachers stress excellence and academic achievement and they, along with students and parents, can all see far over the horizon to very promising futures for George Washington School's students.

PROFILE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

District: Hillside Township
County: Union

Date of School Construction 1931

Enrollment: K-8, 405 (September 30, 1981)

Percent Minority: 98.8%

Daily Average Attendance Rate: 93.1%

* District Total Expense Budget Per Pupil[1] 1980-1981: 2,191.38

State Average[2]: 2,300.27

Region Average[3]: 2,439.52

Enrollment Group Average[4]: 2,448.62

County Average[5]: 2,518.89

DFG Average (C)[6]: 2,211.88

Percent of Students Meeting Minimum Basic Skills Standards, 1981:

Math: 99%
Reading: 100%

---

* 1980-81 New Jersey School Boards Association Cost of Education Index

1 District - represents per pupil expenditures for the districts.

2 State Average - average statewide per pupil expenditures.

3 Region Average - Union County is grouped with Bergen, Essex, and Hudson.

4 Enrollment Group - comparison with all districts in the state with enrollments and grade plans similar to that of Neptune Township.

5 County Average - average county per pupil expenditures.

6 DFG - District Factor Group - the average per pupil expenditures for districts in the same Socio-Economic Status grouping.

THOSE WHO MAKE IT WORK

GEORGE WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HILLSIDE, NEW JERSEY

Ruth Andrews
Patricia Angeles
Eura Bell
Annie Black
Lynn Brewster
Thelma Brown
Elaine Campbell
Casandra Chambers
Zenda Clark
John Cucchiara
Diane Edwards
Essie Edwards
Vivian Einstein
Barbara Frazier
Michael Frost
Mary Gates
Genevieve Giordano
Martin J. Gulino
Linda Hanjian
Marilyn Heinze
Kim Maidment
Joseph McAtee
Joanne McDonald
Eileen McSweeney
Ida Melillo
Camile Mitaratonda
Janet Moran
Sylvia Morgenstern
Phyllis Otterstern
Donald Pennell
JoAnn Perry
Phillip Scardilli
Thomas Shanker
Ruth Shipman
Elaine Spangnola
JoAnne Shumate
Sandra St. George
Carrie Stieber
Regina Stubblebine
Esther Tarler

Patricia Humanik

Cynthia Jones

Raymond Juliana

Edwin Knecht

Eugene Kosakowski

Lorraine Koslowski

Margaret Lett

John Lysko

Angela Mack

Karen Trichart

Naomi Wallace

Earl Wanzer

Louise Washington

Elaine Wesley

Althea William

Robert Winston

Sally Wovsaniker

DeWitt D. Barlow Elementary School

Plainfield, New Jersey

"It's 'Cool' To Be Smart"

As the classroom sign says: "It's 'Cool' To Be Smart." Barlow School staff and supporters seem to believe that a broad basic education in elementary school is the key to a successful life. The world opens its doors to those who work hard and achieve in school. Achievement is the goal at this school and everyone works extremely hard to ensure that all Barlow kids are "cool."

Located on a main artery in Plainfield, Barlow School exudes an aura of a bygone era. A stately, well-maintained building on a large, neatly-trimmed lawn punctuated by sturdy hundred-year-old oak trees, the school is the pride of this predominantly black and increasingly Hispanic neighborhood. A pleasant residential area with old single-family homes and garden apartments provides a safe environment for the neighborhood children, nearly all of whom walk to school.

The visual ambiance of the outside of the school, although formal, seems to draw people in. Parents stop by to see what is happening, and when the weather is nice, neighborhood residents stroll in the park-like area around the building and preschoolers play on the grass. The three hundred students in the kindergarten through fifth grade have positive feelings regarding their school and express their pleasure about being in school.

The proper and formal look of the school from the outside is quickly superseded by the warm, friendly and busy nature of the classrooms. Samples of student work are visible in all classrooms, and the bulletin boards have many items, including posters that depict the minority hertitage of 93% of the students. Overall, the rooms reflect a visually stimulating classroom environment allowing even those students who may slip off into a daydream to "learn by assimilation." A separate reading group area in each classroom emphasizes the importance of reading in this school's curriculum. Learning in Barlow School is aided by this fun, interesting and well-organized environment.

The school is not overcrowded. There are about 23 students per classroom and a bookmobile has been used to supplement the library and reading programs. Students may purchase books from the bookmobile. A multipurpose room serves as an auditorium, gym and cafeteria, which makes scheduling somewhat difficult in this Title I school. Supplemental instruction is conducted in small, roughly constructed cubicles in a converted classroom. Although it is easy to hear what is being done in the next booth, the teachers and students seem able to concentrate on the subjects they are teaching.

Barlow School has been guided by the same principal for the past twenty-one years. He has selected nearly all the staff and has developed an atmosphere of support for the teachers and students. The faculty trusts the principal to be open and fair and to listen to their suggestions. While the principal believes strongly in an organized, directed and efficient school and classroom, he also accepts suggestions and ideas from the faculty. Although

he is the decision-maker, he encourages his staff to provide input. His self-proclaimed "old school" approach has proven to be very effective in maintaining both student achievement and staff morale.

The positive working relationship he has with his staff makes it easy to leave his teachers on their own much of the time while he supervises a special education school located elsewhere in the town. In order to be principal of two schools, he must rely on setting up structures which are clear and can be easily followed by students and staff. A single skills array developed by the central office helps him to do this since all reading and math program activities are keyed to it. The school's goals and methods of achieving those goals have been clearly stated and everyone supports and follows them.

Parents trust the teachers to do what is best for their children and they give them the latitude to use their professional skills to the maximum. Parents expect their children to be in school and the 92% student attendance rate shows students rarely are absent. The parents feel their children are well cared for during the school day since the building has a full-time nurse to administer to the normal complaints of cuts and bruises. In addition, the school boasts a senior citizen volunteer who adds a very special, positive direction to the school's atmosphere. The custodian is also involved in the programs of the school and is concerned that students are not interrupted during testing and that they feel their building is a nice place to attend. The school secretary is also very supportive of the school's programs. These people do everything possible to help the students and teachers accomplish their tasks.

Experience and stability seem to be two of the keys to the success at Barlow. Teachers have taught there for an average of ten years and have become sophisticated and well-informed regarding methods of teaching and of identifying and meeting individual needs of children. More than half the teachers hold graduate degrees in reading or early childhood education. They cooperate and plan with each other, with the supplemental instructors, and with the support staff. There is an especially close work relationship on each grade level.

Teachers are interested in the home life of their students and how it affects their learning and study habits. To help increase school-parent contact, the teachers will call parents at home in the evening if necessary to discuss their children's progress. Formal conferences, when needed, may be held in the late afternoon or in the evening. Scheduling conference time during the day, when many parents can't attend, may look appropriate on paper but is of no benefit to the kids, their parents or to the teachers. Everyone's time is valuable and the staff uses its time effectively.

Discipline, handled primarily by the classroom teacher, is good. Some classrooms have rules clearly posted and the school strongly supports good conduct by the students. A supportive and firm approach pervades the building, and teachers can often be heard making positive comments to and about their students.

The teachers place considerable emphasis on achievement motivation and self-esteem. The students feel that sincere, not condescending, help is "cool" and they expect their teachers to help them. The teachers in Barlow certainly meet the student's expectation. As one of the teachers said, "What

makes the difference at Barlow is how much the teachers want to give...to learn...to help...to expect."

Instruction at Barlow School is primarily teacher directed and clearly focused on content. New methods, such as individualization, grouping, discussions, and discovery, are all used to build on the basic traditional approach. These approaches are smoothly integrated into the methods used by each teacher, although each classroom has its own ambiance. The Title I and Compensatory Education teachers help the classroom teacher to develop supplemental activities and to use them effectively. Staff sharing of ideas, methods, information, and research is common. This sharing, along with a teacher attendance rate exceeding 91%, are certainly major components of this very cohesive instructional program.

The reading specialist is a master link in the chain of programs available at Barlow. While many schools try to incorporate reading into other content areas, Barlow takes a different approach; it coordinates and provides for other content areas through the comprehensive reading program. Detailed records are kept on each child's needs and progess so that plans and programs are specially designed to either prevent or remediate learning deficiencies. Even those programs that are pull-out, such as ESL, are centrally coordinated by the reading specialist to ensure consistency in the basic skills efforts. In every program, each child is expected to master all the skills in a sequential and logical manner, but the teachers also insist that the child must be able to apply what is learned. To do this, emphasis is placed on good listening skills and correct study habits. A solid base for good learning is developed in the kindergarten, which stresses academics and provides needed structure for the children.

At Barlow, no formal science program exists and the librarian is only available two days per week. The teachers, principal, and coordinators have made the best of the situation by devising classroom programs that stimulate the child's interest in areas other than reading and math. Additional activities are also provided by part-time art, music, and physical education teachers. Assemblies, held twice per month, vary considerably depending on what the faculty thinks might be of interest to the students and on what is available. The students enjoy and learn from those experiences; therefore, assembly days are very special.

At Barlow, teachers continue to learn from each other in order to ensure that their students receive the best possible instruction. Informal in-service by the reading specialist and the classrom teachers focus on new content, ideas, materials and teaching strategies. These activities are in addition to the regularly scheduled district in-service programs. The teachers' interest and active pursuit of greater achievement for themselves sets an excellent example for students. The students at Barlow respect their teachers and can easily observe that "It's 'cool' to be smart."

PROFILE OF DEWITT D. BARLOW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

District: Plainfield City
County: Union

Date of School Construction: 1939, with a 1952 addition.

Enrollment: K-5, 310

Percent Minority: 95.2%

Daily Average Attendance Rate: 92.2%

*District Total Expense Budget Per Pupil[1] 1980-1981:	2,259.46
State Average[2]:	2,300.27
Region Average[3]:	2,411.25
Enrollment Group Average[4]:	2,132.83
County Average[5]:	2,489.23
DFG Average (B)[6]:	2,027.26

Percent of Students Meeting Minimum Basic Skills Standards, 1981:

Math:	94.4%
Reading:	98.1%

---

*1980-1981 New Jersey School Boards Association Cost of Education Index

1. District - represents per pupil expenditures for the district
2. State Average - average statewide per pupil expenditures
3. Region Average - Union County is grouped with Bergen, Essex, and Hudson.
4. Enrollment Group - comparison with all districts in the state with enrollments and grade plans similar to that of Plainfield City.
5. County Average - average county per pupil expenditures
6. DFG - District Factor Group - the average per pupil expenditures for districts in the same Socio-Economic grouping.

THOSE WHO MAKE IT WORK

DeWitt D. Barlow Elementary School

Plainfield, New Jersey

Alifah Akram
Richard Betts
Carolyn Boulware
Dorothy Branch
Carolyn Britton
Lillie Campbell
Alice Carroll
Philip Clingerman
John Coleman
Ruth Davies
Lillian Donnley
Fern Drescher
Constance Durante
Rita Freer
Sheila Greenwood
Kenneth Glover
Joanne Hart-Martinez
Marie Hennebery
Naomi Howard
Frances Jones
Lola Jordan
John Kefalonitis
Linda Konciak
Dorothy Kriney
Richard Landy
Charlotte Larson
Cynthia Liu
Jim Malkmus
Raymond McConnell
Jane Newsom
Susan Pidgeon
Frances Piotrowski
Patricia Reilly
Bertha Roberts
Maurice Rybowski
Barbara Saunders
Robert Segall
Marshall Sharp
Frances Sikanowicz
Virginia Sperry
Marion Stanley
Beatrice Stavitsky
Ernst Von Bing
Mazel Wells

Written by:

Daniel W. Kunz

Frederick W. Cook Elementary School

Plainfield, New Jersey

"Cook School is a Place Where.....

....Standards are important and only one's best is acceptable;

Freedoms are earned;

Responsibilities are shared; and

Participation is a duty"

A credo, a philosophy, a way of life for teachers and students to live by is represented by this statement, which is found on a sign in the entrance way to the building. Everyone seems to abide by these tenets and the result is a highly successful school environment.

Listings of students on the honor roll, a show case with announcements highlighting those classes with attendance even better than the normal 94%, and a collage of faces superimposed on a United States map showing "We the people of the United States...," can also be found in the entranceway, exemplifying the spirit and atmosphere of this urban elementary school in Plainfield.

Ground rules for students are in evidence by such signs as "Follow Directions" and "Do Your Best Work". But the most telling poster is "I can because I say I can." Everyone believes the students can achieve and with only a 5% retention rate and exceptional basic skills scores, there is evidence that such a belief is accurate.

The climate of the school is further supported by its campus environment. A small building, well kept but needing some repair, the school is located on sixteen acres of grassland, ponds, and trees which are used as a neighborhood park. At first glance the building reminds you of an old college building. The halls are clean. Evidence of student projects can be seen. A quiet but purposeful decorum pervades the atmosphere of those halls. However, in virtually every classroom, there is considerable activity. Students are busy and teachers are focused on teaching.

In the neighborhood, considerable pride and care can be seen. The houses, which are predominantly single or two-family residences, are well maintained. It is noteworthy that the school serves students from throughout the city as part of the district's desegration plan. Consistent with district demographics, the school population is over 90% minority.

The school secretary warmly greets newcomers to the school. Equally pleasant are the custodians who not only help you find your way, but talk about "their" building in terms that show pride in the students, staff and the structure. These support people help to maintain the pride and pleasantness that characterize Cook School.

The building principal has high regard for his staff and for the students in Cook School. He believes the primary reasons for the success of the school are the professional manner in which the teachers work together and their concern for their students. He believes that he is responsible for the policy and program decisions that affect the school, but he believes that the teachers' expertise is a necessary component for arriving at those decisions.

Teachers are permitted to use whatever teaching method best fits them and their students. Nearly total confidence in a staff is necessary to allow such an eclectic approach and to enable it to work effectively.

Since teachers handle most of their students' discipline problems within the classroom, the principal is free to be involved in curriculum matters and with the Title I, compensatory education, and general basic skills programs. He oversees the reading schedule calendar and the skills array that is taught. It appears that these centralized functions are desirable elements of the overall structure of Cook School. Although a centralized system is used, individual student differences are always accommodated.

In Cook School, the teachers' willingness to share ideas, to help each other whenever necessary, and to do whatever is necessary including working many extra hours, are key factors in the school's success. A strong fellowship exists among the teachers as well as considerable professional respect for each other's competence. All the teachers care and demonstrate that caring every day.

Most of the teachers are experienced and expert professionals who recognize the need for strong, well-guided classroom instruction. Although many teaching methods are used in the building, teacher-directed lessons predominate. Grouping, individualized instruction, and discovery approaches are also used when deemed to be the most effective possible approach.

All classrooms and programs are organized and structured while each classroom reflects a warm and active child-oriented atmosphere. Students seem to have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and what they can expect of their teachers. Since the intellectual, emotional and physical well-being of the students is the primary concern of all the teachers, the students' expectations are easily met. The principal believes that a structured approach to teaching works best since it emphasizes good work and study habits and creates an atmosphere of success and achievement. The teachers' support of this belief is evident in their classroom activities. When it is necessary to meet the needs of a child who needs a more loosely structured environment, the child is accomodated. Students feel satisfied, the activity is completed, and the learning is accomplished.

Considerable effort is made by the faculty of Cook School to guarantee sufficient time on task for each child to master the basic skills. This is sometimes difficult in classes that may have up to thirty children. The student, however, is never part of a crowd. He or she may receive individual classroom achievement awards when his or her efforts or achievement are noteworthy. In four grades, multi-age grouping is both desirable and necessary. These groupings, as well as the single grade classrooms, use many of the curriculum ideas originating from the Individually Guided Education Programs (IGE), again emphasizing the needs of individual children within a grouped, structured atmosphere.

While the basic skills are critical to the success of any comprehensive program, it is obvious that the teachers at Cook School emphasize higher levels of thinking whenever possible. Considerable support for both the

basics and the teaching of higher order thinking skills comes from the president of the teachers' union, who teaches in the building. She believes strongly in the need for teachers to be role models for the children and to expend the time and energy necessary to design the best lessons possible. Nearly all discussions that can be heard during the school day are professional in nature. Students and their needs are the concern of this school and the foundation for the high degree of teacher commitment.

Although substitutes may not always be available, the teachers' plans are kept in a manner to help whoever works with the students during their absence. When a teacher absence occurs, other teachers often will each take a few children from the class so that everyone is guaranteed a full day of learning. In an emergency, everyone helps. Wasted time is minimized. Teachers also often have their planning periods taken up by unanticipated duties and therefore must spend even more time in after-hours preparation. .It is not uncommon for telephone conferences with parents to take place at night.

The strong bond of mutual respect among the teachers, their high expectations for the children, a logically structured program, and the teachers' respect for each child occur at Cook School in a winning combination.

The teachers and the principal have created not only an atmosphere where everyone says "please" and "thank you" but a curriculum which emphasizes the basic skills and also supports creativity, initiative, and thinking skills. While no formal career education, home economics, or industrial arts programs exist in this kindergarten through sixth grade school, the library is a

"cultural impact center" to expand the classroom learning of the students. Even the youngest child at Cook School experiences an academic environment with a readiness program in kindergarten.

Supplemental programs are carried out in the school library, which has both scheduled and open time. The supplemental programs offer the students new horizons in many fields. These interesting programs are largely due to the creativity and ingenuity of the teachers since materials are scarce and audio-visual equipment is virtually non-existent. What is produced, therefore, closely matches the teachers' and students' needs. Activities conducted in the library are continued by teacher aides and the classroom teacher. In addition, students enjoy the activities provided by a shared time art teacher, a music teacher and a physical education teacher.

Special classes are provided for neurologically impaired students. Teachers of these classes believe that the children should be actively involved in all normal school activities. The daily schedule includes time in regular classrooms, participation in lunch time and recess activities. Special class members receive achievement awards and recognition with the regular student body.

A variety of supplemental approaches is used with students receiving special instruction under the Compensatory Education and Title I programs. In some cases, small out-of-class groups are considered the best approach to supplemental instruction. Other supplemental instruction is on an individual basis either in class by a supplemental instructor or out of class. Math and reading instructors are available for supplemental instruction on an

individual basis. The keys to the success of this selective approach seem to be the sequential nature of the skills being developed, the use of testing to identify needs, and the strong communication and cooperation system the teachers have developed.

High achievement, a teacher attendance rate of more than 90%, and safety patrols whose members are so proud of their position that they wear their belts all day long are all strong indicators of pride and success; pride and success that are not only worthy of note but also worthy of support.

Cook School is a place where standards are met; where the freedom to use the best methods for each instructor has been earned by demonstrated success; where everyone helps one another and shares responsibilities when needed. Cook school is successful in part because faculty and staff expect no less of themselves than they do of their students. And that is quite a bit.

PROFILE OF FREDERICK W. COOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

District: Plainfield

County: Union

Date of School Construction: 1935

Enrollment: K-6, 386

Percent Minority: 90.8%

Daily Average Attendance Rate: 93.1%

*District Total Expense Budget Per Pupil[1] 1980-1981:	2259.46
State Average[2]:	2300.27
Region Average[3]:	2411.25
Enrollment Group Average[4]:	2132.83
County Average[5]:	2489.23
DFG Average (B)[6]:	2042.25

Percent of Students Meeting Minimum Basic Skills Standards, 1981:

Math:	94.4
Reading:	98.1

---

*1980-1981 New Jersey School Boards Association Cost of Education Index

1. District - represents per pupil expenditures for the district.
2. State Average - average statewide per pupil expenditures.
3. Region Average - Union County is grouped with Bergen, Essex and Hudson counties.
4. Enrollment Group - comparison with all districts in the state with enrollments and grade plans similar to that of Neptune Township.
5. County Average - average county per pupil expenditures.
6. DFG - District Factor Group - the average per pupil expenditures for districts in the same Socio-Economic Status grouping.

THOSE WHO MAKE IT WORK

FREDERICK W. COOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Plainfield, New Jersey

Blanche Anderson
Philip Anderson
Richard Betts
Carolyn Boulware
Rupert Chapman
Linda Chieffo
Erlene Chiles
Gary Domanski
Eve Donahue
Lisa Festante
Patsy Filippone
Marilyn Goldberg
Sarah Goldstein
Anne Harrington
Ruth Hayes
Mary Hunter
Sylvia Hutchinson
Barbara Johnson
Carol Kennedy
Anne Kramer
Richard Landy
Patricia Lanzone
Roslyn Lashin
Jessie Long
Joanne Macaluso
Catherine Mondik
Louis A. Mone
Elizabeth Morse
Vicki Peters
Minnie Reese
Wilbur Robinson
Diana Rochon
Maurice Rybowski
Elaine Scalamoni
Patricia Schael
Linda Simon
Marion Sims
Geraldine Stair
Patricia Thompson
Guy Trenton
Beth Zoller
Frankie Zurav

Written by:
David W. Pearsall

The Franklin School Family

A tree-lined walk leads from busy Dodd Street to the front entrance of Franklin School, a kindergarten through fifth grade school in East Orange. The red-brick building faces a broad lawn where four temporary classroom units sit to one side. The school is old, but all around are signs of care. The walks are swept. The grass is cut. The trees and shrubs are trimmed. Even from the outside, the school reflects a basic belief of the staff: success is made of doing many small things excellently and with great care. Caring has created a sense of belonging to the Franklin School family, and it's apparent that belonging to the family is a key ingredient in the Franklin success story.

East Orange is unquestionably an urban school district. The streets surrounding Franklin School have many well-maintained single-family homes, but an occasional boarded-up house bears silent witness to the problems of cities. The school is not isolated from city problems. During any school year there may be as many as 30% of the children moving into and out of the school. More than half of the children are eligible for free lunches. But at Franklin School, the principal and his staff don't see problems; they see opportunities to help and to educate.

School people tell parents and children that everyone is important. Everyone belongs here. Everybody has feelings and ideas that count at Franklin School. Everyone works together to do one thing--learn as much as possible. At the same time, staff members do their jobs well so that through

their example, children learn about the importance of having goals, planning, and staying with the job until goals are reached.

Setting goals and providing help to reach them is a primary task of the school district central office. The district staff has high aspirations for children's success in school. A massive motivational campaign has been mounted stressing school success. Each school in the district must develop an annual plan which outlines, among other things, specific ways in which achievement goals will be reached. The schools themselves are responsible for translating district goals into action.

District support for achievement and goal-directed action is a cooperative effort between central office and the school. For example, there are eight half-day staff in-service sessions scheduled by the district each year. Three district-wide sessions for staff members from all schools are held, but five sessions are planned to meet the exclusive needs of Franklin School. A committee of staff members at the school plans a variety of activities for each inservice day. Then, staff members consult with the principal to determine which training sessions will best meet their own professional development needs.

The same planning and organization involved in staff development is evident in the school program. Leading the reading and mathematics programs at the school are two experienced and caring resource teachers. They keep track of the reading and mathematics progress of every student in the school. They meet with grade-level teams to review the instructional plans for each class. They assist the regular classroom teacher and the basic skills

improvement teachers, who work within the classrooms, as they plan cooperatively for students needing extra help in basic skills. Through the resource teachers and an organized management system, the principal is able to provide technical assistance to all of his teachers. He is also able to determine, by reviewing resource teacher weekly reports, the specific basic skills instruction being provided in every classroom.

When the principal visits each classroom in the school, as he does every day, he is aware of exactly what is happening in the instructional program. This makes it possible for him to give encouragement to students about things they are currently studying. Children say they are proud and pleased when the principal talks to them about their work. They know that he will stop by each day and ask about their progress, so they work every day to accomplish objectives. Children take pride, too, in the fact that the teacher checks off each objective that they achieve on their own reading and math instructional folders. These folders not only serve as the basis of the basic skills instructional management system, but they also help motivate children to attend to daily work as more and more objectives are starred.

While teachers and children know they will see the principal in the classroom every day, they also know that they can see him privately about any concern, and that he will see children referred to him for any reason. Every day the principal sees children who need encouragement with school work or who need disciplinary counselling. He is able to devote the bulk of his time to the curriculum, the children, and the staff during the school day because of the skilled service of the school's administrative assistant--a man with more than thirty years of experience in the district, who focuses on the non-curriculum related tasks of running the school.

Experience and stability are characteristics of the teaching staff as well as of the administrators. The principal has served for nine years in his post and had taught at Franklin for four years before his promotion. The teachers have an average of fifteen years of experience with the last ten years being at Franklin. All teachers have bachelors' degrees and more than 38% have graduate degrees.

Experience, solid training and a desire for success seem to be reflected in everyone's work--staff members and children go about their daily activities with enthusiasm. It is not unusual to see children and adults working together on special projects, bulletin board displays, assembly programs, and classroom programs to which parents are invited.

It is not a surprise, then, that teachers volunteer to serve on the Parent-Teacher Organization's executive board, and in return that parents are willing to give time as class parents. As a result, they share common goals for children's learning. One example of this common purpose is the Franklin School PTA calendar. This popular calendar hangs on every classroom wall and is distributed to every home. Every date is noted when some important school event is scheduled. Every month has a learning goal listed at the top of the page. On the page for May, a question is asked, "Have you scheduled two conferences with the teacher this year?" The calendar shows goal emphasis, and it also gives information about how the goals are to be reached.

Another technique of parent-teacher cooperation is the use of home learning packets. Teachers prepare activities for parents and children to use

at home during vacation times. This gives everyone a feeling of participation in the learning process and has been popular with parents.

Parents who are new to Franklin School are strangers for only a short time. The principal meets new families on the day they enroll their children. He shows them the school and introduces them to their children's teachers. If he is unable to do this, he calls the parents within a day or two to welcome them and talk about their concerns. Soon, a class parent calls personally to invite the new family to one of the school activities.

All of the communications between home and school seem to be clear and useful. Teachers frequently call home to discuss a child's progress. Also, notes are freely exchanged not only when problems arise, but also when a child is praised for his accomplishment. On a more formal level, there is a PTA newsletter that reports on school news. But even the official documents, like the report card, are designed to communicate information in a rational way with the parents in mind. Several years ago Franklin School used a district report card which contained lengthly lists of skills with terms like "slow progress," and "rapid progress" used as grades. It was not well-understood. With great good sense, the district and Franklin School switched to a report card that parents could understand--subjects are assigned grades based on the amount and quality of the student's accomplishment and standardized test scores and instructional grade levels are listed. This has met with universal approval from parents and teachers.

Probably the clearest expression of the Franklin family comes every year on a Saturday in May. Then, everyone enjoys the PTA Family Fair with food,

games, and competitions. The fair is fun and is the result of cooperation and effort. It involves the whole neighborhood in what is really a celebration of a successful school--one that cares, works, and gets results.

Profile of Franklin School

Date of School Construction: 1873, 1898, 1922

Enrollment: K-5, 700

Percent Minority: 97.7%

Daily Average Attendance Rate: 92.3%

*District Total Expense Budget Per Pupil[1] 1980-1981:	1,831.58
State Average[2]:	2,300.27
Region Average[3]:	2,439.52
Enrollment Group Average[4]:	2,135.61
County Average[5]:	2,450.04
DFG Average (A)[6]:	1,869.21 (Net)

Percent of Students Meeting Minimum Basic Skills Standards, 1981:

Math:	97.9%
Reading:	99.9%

*1980-1981 New Jersey School Boards Association Cost of Education Index

1. District - represents per pupil expenditures for the district
2. State Average - average statewide per pupil expenditures
3. Region Average - Essex County is grouped with others in the northeastern region
4. Enrollment Group - comparison with all districts in the state with enrollments and grade plans similar to that of East Orange
5. County Average - average county per pupil expenditures
6. DFG - District Factor Group - the average per pupil expenditures for districts in the same Socio-Economic grouping.

THOSE WHO MAKE IT WORK

Franklin School
East Orange
New Jersey

Carol Bartlett
Maijo Baumans
Janet Bearn
Naiomi Berger
Jane Bisson
Sherill Busby
Dwight Carlisle
Thelma Castlewood
James Caulfield
Vivian Cerruto
John Czarnecki
Marie Day
Sandra DeShield
Patricia Doherty
Phyllis Ellman
Lillian Fen
Florence Goldberg
Denise Hamilton
Henry Hamilton
Doris Harris
Thomasena Harris
Janet Harper
Brenda Hill
Catherine Holcombe
Richard Howard
Shirley Howard
Janice Jackson
Laura Jackson
Patricia Jacober
Dorothy Jaker
Margaret Keane
Loretta Kearney
Phyllis Lapman
Donna Lewis
Earl Lockhart
Sara Maddox
Marguerite McLean
Alison Moore
Joyce Muldrow
Joyce Munk
Priscilla Pollacek
Estelle Pooran
Marge Powell
Gerry Roberts
Lynn Roberts
Sandra Samuels
Nancy Schron
June Simpkins
Frank Silla
Edward Sinavage
Madge Speers
Maggie Stevens
Zelda Swerdloff
Peggy Taylor
Judith Thatcher
Christine Thornbourne
Delores Trimble
Patricia Wadleigh
Eula Walker
Mabel Walker
Alfred Webber
Victoria Wheeler

Written by:
Constance O'Dea

"OUR SCHOOL"

Achievement is not limited at School #16 in Paterson, although the school building is. For lunch, tables are set up in the hallways; the teachers' room is behind a cooking unit; extra resources are kept in the classrooms since there is no room for a library. Teachers and students are in close quarters at School #16. But no one, teacher, student, or administrator, feels slighted. Rather, they are all enthusiastic about "their school."

School #16 is located in a lower-middle income level residential neighborhood in Paterson. The school, serving students from kindergarten through fourth grade, was built in 1891 and has had only minor renovations. Pride of ownership is evident in school #16; the floors shine like mirrors, the walls are immaculate and the hallways are covered with colorful projects made by the students. Included with the students' materials are photographs of the students and their teachers. The collage captures the students' enthusiasm about the school and welcomes visitors.

Over the years, School #16 has seen many changes in the neighborhood; from primarily Dutch, to Italian, to Spanish. Students from many ethnic groups now attend School #16, with the predominant groups from Italy and from Spanish-speaking countries. About 75 percent of the students are from families in which both parents work. But while the assistance those parents can give their children is limited, they show a high level of interest in their children's academic achievement. About 97 percent of the parents attend Report Card Conference Night, where they find on hand Spanish and Italian translators--parent volunteers--to assist them. The principal feels that parental involvement is a vital part of education.

"The Principal is Everywhere"

The principal has been an administrator in the Paterson School District since 1962. During that time he has administered various schools within the district. He came to School #16 two years ago, and has developed the reputation for being in all parts of the school each day. He arrives every morning before 7:30 in order to set up the plan for the day, which includes an outline of all pertinent information that day for the staff. He tries to complete his managerial duties before staff arrive so that school time is devoted entirely to students, parents, and teachers. During the time the children are in school, he is seldom in his office unless he is tutoring children. On any given day he can be seen assisting students with computation activities, or administering and correcting a test, and then working with a child to remediate deficiencies.

He says this involvement helps him gain insight into the problems that students are having. For example, he discovered that the students did not have a good working knowledge of monetary transactions. Reasons for that lack of knowledge seem to stem from environmental factors: a transitional neighborhood, new supermarkets and the fact that parents are reluctant to give large denominations of money when sending a small child to the store. With this insight, he initiated changes in the math instructional strategies and developed simulated "food stores."

One gets the feeling that the staff and students believe that the principal is a person with whom they can easily talk because of the humanistic philosophy which characterizes his relationship with them. For example,

hanging on his office wall is a marionette named Eddie. Eddie's mission is to be a comforting figure for the children of School #16. When the children have difficulties in adjusting to school life, become involved in fights, or are angry, they are more willing to discuss their problem with Eddie than with an adult. The principal uses this unusual avenue of communication very effectively.

The principal puts a great deal of care into getting the students involved in what is going on in the school. Halloween photographs (including teachers in their costumes) are displayed in the hallways to recall the school Halloween activities. At Christmas time, there is a visit from Santa Claus -- a retired teacher from another school in Paterson. Group and individual color photographs in the hallways also record his visit with the children. Special projects such as an art or math/science exhibit are displayed on tables in the hallways. And every Friday, there are assemblies when all the students in the school come together in one of the kindergarten rooms. The assembly programs offer opportunities for the students to perform, or just the chance for all to be together, and instill school spirit in students, teachers, and parents, who are welcome to come. Teachers take turns conducting the assemblies and arranging the programs. At the end of each assembly, everyone sings the school song.

The principal also takes very seriously his responsibility for developing and implementing a school basic skills program. In consultation with the staff, he has outlined building goals, objectives, and standards. The staff has been involved in the development of their own policies and procedures,

with Board of Education approval. The staff members say that the principal has included them in many of the decisions regarding the school, and that they perceive him to be supportive.

Teaching reading and mathematics to all students is the principal's top priority. He spends much of his time in classrooms, teaching or making suggestions to the teachers. Many of the teachers' lesson plans include skills and practice activities for individual students. This technique helps both the principal and the teachers to focus on each student's specific needs.

A "Student-Oriented" Staff

The teachers in School #16 have an average of 13 years teaching experience, and most have been teaching at School #16 for more than six years. Although very few of the staff have training beyond their undergraduate degrees, they are informally involved in upgrading their skills. It is common to hear teachers discussing the latest issue of The Reading Teacher or Instructor over lunch. They use all of the district's resources to supplement their skills and materials. District resource teachers conducted more than 50 demonstration lessons last year -- all requested by classroom teachers. The resource teachers noted that many of the techniques used in the demonstrations were in fact being adopted by the teachers.

For the past two years, School #16 has cooperated with William Paterson College to help train students who are in the college's junior practicum teaching program. These enthusiastic students come to School #16 every Wednesday and Thursday to observe, assist, and then teach.

Since the teachers at School #16 have no free time during the day (they have 30 minutes for lunch and no other unassigned periods), they hold informal, impromptu conferences to discuss students and materials. The classroom teachers and the compensatory education teacher meet frequently since the classroom teachers direct the remedial program for each of their students receiving this assistance. For the compensatory instruction program, the compensatory education teacher accompanies the children to and from their classrooms. At that time, it is not unusual for both teachers to discuss, briefly, that day's or the next day's instruction. The classroom teachers are strong supporters of the compensatory education program mainly because of its successes. The teachers remember the many children whose skills improved through the compensatory program.

The teachers in this school are known for "refusing to give up on a child." Students are placed, based on test results, in groups where they will have the best chance of succeeding. There are high teacher expectations for student achievement, and instruction is based on teaching, testing, and re-teaching. Teacher-made materials are developed to personalize instruction, and support is given by the resource teachers, child study team, parents and the principal.

The relationship between the teachers and the students reflects the teachers' child-orientation. The staff, including the principal, are positive in their approach to students. Teachers praise every accomplishment, regardless of how small, which creates a very supportive environment. The support extends into the students' homes. Teachers create materials that parents and

children can use at home. Although some parents hesitate to work with their children at home because of their own English language problems, the teachers believe that most parents appreciate and use the materials.

There are few classroom disruptions and few instances of unacceptable behavior at School #16. The staff attributes this to the fact that unacceptable behavior is just not tolerated in the school. This policy is supported by everyone in the school including parents. The parents feel that firm discipline creates the proper learning enviornment for their children.

The teachers are very possessive about the school and its programs. When talking about School #16, the teachers as well as the principal, students and parents refer to it as "our school." The principal refers to School #16 as a "large family" rather than a small school. Feelings of kinship are the model for all relationships in the school.

"Our School"

Since many of the parents have recently immigrated to the United States, the school staff has tried to make the school as accessible and sensitive to their needs as possible. The availability of interpreters has increased the number of parents who attend school functions and those who will contact the school to discuss matters of concern. Communication between the school and the parents is more effective because materials going home to the parents are written in the two predominant languages of the community--English and Spanish. Some notices are also written in Italian.

Because of the multi-ethnic composition of the community served by the school, the staff is very sensitive to cultural differences and has tried to incorporate these differences into the school program. Parents are pleased with the classroom projects that are designed to foster international understanding and good will. In addition, the district and the staff have developed a series of mathematics and reading materials, Mathematics Achievement through Parent Participation (MAPPs) and Reading Achievement through Parent Participation (RAPPs) to involve parents in their children's education. Teachers find that parents use these materials mostly during the summer.

The teachers are pleased with the interest exhibited by the parents, and the parents generously attribute the success of the school to the efforts of the principal and the teachers. The parents are such strong supporters of the school that they have volunteered to assist with special projects and field trips. School #16 has no teacher aides, so the assistance of parents in these activities has been especially welcome. Parent aides also help at lunch time.

Parents are also particularly pleased by the absence of problems that plague many other urban schools: truancy, violence, drug abuse. Vandalism and graffiti, which exist only on the exterior of the building, were decreased when the Board of Education last year installed a new sound-sensing alarm system. In addition, the principal eliminated some potentially hazardous situations involving the fire exits and exposed hot water pipes. The principal is also forming a neighborhood "watchdog" group composed of neighbors and parents who can see the building at night and report any school incidents. They have a personal stake in maintaining an attractive school building.

School #16 in Paterson encounters problems similar to those faced by urban schools throughout the state. The administration and staff confront and resolve these problems, and thereby create an environment conducive to effective learning. As one visitor commented, "In School #16 in Paterson, students know that they are in school to learn, that all their teachers expect them to learn, that their teachers and principal help them to learn...and they love it!"

Profile of School #16

Paterson

District: Paterson
County: Passaic

Date of School Construction: 1891

Enrollment: K-4, 305*

Percent Minority: 65.1%

Daily Average Attendance Rate: 92.6%

**District Total Expense Budget Per Pupil[1] 1980-1981:	$1,611.99
State Average[2]:	2,300.27
Region Average[3]:	2,439.52
Enrollment Group Average[4]:	2,135.61
County Average[5]:	1,981.70
DFG Average (A)[6]:	1,869.21

Percent of Students Meeting Minimum Basic Skills Standards, 1981:

Math: 95.2%
Reading: 88.1%

---

*For the school year 1980-81, when the review team visited the school. For the school year 1981-82, the school served kindergarten through 5th grade students.

**1980-1981 New Jersey School Boards Association Cost of Education Index

1. District - represents per pupil expenditures for the district.
2. State Average - average statewide per pupil expenditures.
3. Region Average - Passaic County is grouped with Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset, Sussex and Warren counties.
4. Enrollment Group - comparison with all districts in the state with enrollments and grade palns similar to that of Neptune Township.
5. County Average - average county per pupil expenditures.
6. DFG - District Factor Group - the average per pupil expenditures for districts in the same socio-economic status grouping.

THOSE WHO MAKE IT WORK

School No. 16

Paterson, New Jersey

Fred Allegra
Doris Alpart
Naomi Belvin
Sue Blank
Dorothy Blass
Amelia Bria
Barry Bruckner
Carmen Colon
LouAnne Cosenza
Michele De Vito
Joseph Di Gangi
Elizabeth Durkin
Beverly Ferris
Carolyn Fillmore
Thomas Gladden
Sylvia Holder
Lynn Horan
Helen Knapp
Deborah Leitgeb
Dolores Lewis
Angela Malfa
Joyce Melville
Michael Paciga
Gregory Porcino
Dorothy Quinn
Leslie Rosenblatt
Salvatore Scarpinato
Dora Shearin
Janice Smith
Bessmary Soemer
Rosemarie Tandurella
John Verilla
Brenda Westheim
Margaret Young
Deborah Ziering

Written by:
David W. Pearsall

A QUEST FOR EXCELLENCE

Located on a quiet residential street in the Westminster section of Elizabeth, the Robert Morris School serves neighborhood children from kindergarten through fifth grade. The building is neat, clean, and well-maintained. The front entrance is framed by a gleaming white portico and shaded by a large maple tree on the left. To the right is a small tree planted last year by children and parents to celebrate the school's fiftieth anniversary. The community seems to care about this neighborhood school, and an example of their pride is reflected in the physical care given to the building. In return, adults who work in the school are very proud of the students and families of the Robert Morris School. Together, their efforts represent what the principal calls "a quest for excellence." This focus on excellence may help to explain the successful achievement of so many of the school's students.

The Robert Morris School neighborhood has changed over the last generation. As in other cities, families have grown up and moved away. However, the new residents, many of whom are recent immigrants to this country, have brought with them a set of values which includes respect for and support of educational institutions. And the respect is mutual. School and district personnel are quick to praise parent interest and participation in school life.

An important element in the success of Robert Morris School is the support of the district in helping the local school community solve problems and make improvements. Here is just one example of how the school district

office helps. About ten years ago, most school districts implemented in-school lunch programs. Many city schools, including Robert Morris, had no food service facilities and were forced to use frozen foods -- the TV dinner approach -- to provide lunch. Parents were not particularly pleased with school lunch facilities. Children seemed very unhappy and developed increasingly negative feelings about lunch time. There was great waste of food. Something had to be done.

With strong support from the principal, "family-style" food service began with aides helping children select their own portions. To increase positive social behavior, senior citizens and parents were invited to share lunch with the children. Children helped set tables and cleared them after lunch. Today, this district-supported program is an enormous source of satisfaction to children, parents, and staff. The principal says, "Children have shown a new interest in food. The parents are delighted. The staff notices a positive effect on the behavior and attitudes of all our children."

Central support for local school improvement efforts is also seen in district staff development approaches. Twice a year there are district-wide staff development activities. However, the district encourages the bulk of staff in-service work on the needs of teachers and children to be held in the school. The principal, then, is able to provide assistance to individual teachers, grade-level groups, and curriculum committees as necessary within the framework of the daily operations of the school.

The principal is a visible leader. He frequently visits classrooms to compliment children on their progress or to praise a special class project. He is usually on the spot when classes hold special activities related to their work. He is often a guest at one table or another during lunch hour.

It's the principal who speaks about and encourages excellence in all aspects of school life. He believes that learning basic skills is very important, but that high basic skills achievement is a result of teaching all areas of the curriculum well. So, he encourages teachers to aim for excellence in teaching art, literature, music, social studies, science, and physical education. One practical way the principal uses to infuse basic skills into other areas of the program is to have each classroom teacher meet with specialists in art, music, and physical education. Together they plan the year's work by using the district's basic skills array. They determine the class's strengths and weaknesses, and then they devise specific activities cooperatively to teach specific basic skills in the special classes. This strategy increases classroom learning time devoted to specific skills instruction. But at the same time, the intrinsic value of art, music, and other subjects is emphasized.

The humanities and sciences are constantly highlighted. There are student art exhibits. There is a painting of the month program in which all classes thoroughly research an artist and one particular work. Through this work basic language arts skills are developed, such as reporting and researching, while children learn about art. Every child in the school can talk easily about some aspect of the painting of the month. A kindergartener can chat about the colors of the painting; a fifth grader may talk about how the painting is similar to others of the same period.

Other activities involving the entire school include an annual family science fair where children and parents together exhibit projects that they have developed. Another highlight of the year enhances social studies skills while celebrating the ethnic diversity of the school. Parents, teachers and children plan and prepare an international food festival. This year, national dishes from more than twenty-five countries were featured.

It is standard practice for teachers at Robert Morris School to participate in special activities because they understand that every event is an opportunity to reinforce basic skills and to extend and enrich learning opportunities. Every special event is as carefully planned as regular classroom instruction. Careful instructional planning can be seen in the manner that all subjects are organized for teaching. For example reading and mathematics are taught to large groups. Then, based on individual progress documented on skills charts, children receive individualized instruction for development and remediation of specific skills. The teachers know that children need to work on activities that give them success as they practice newly acquired skills.

Because teachers plan for children's success in learning activities, there is practically no interruption in the flow of classroom work. Teachers report very few behavior problems. When classes are in session, children can be seen hard at work on lessons selected for them individually by their teachers. Lessons prepared for whole-class presentation also result in high levels of pupil attention and participation. Observations of classes show teachers using effective techniques of questioning and periodic summarizing to keep each student involved in the lessons.

Teachers not only plan effectively and expect children to succeed, but they also exhibit energy and ethusiasm. The school boasts a low absence rate both for students and staff. The average teacher has thirteen years of experience, with approximately eight years of service at Robert Morris School. The principal notes that staff experience, combined with willingness to learn from each other and enthusiastic classroom performance, results in a vital learning climate for children.

This climate is enriched by the presence of parents in the school. An active PTA is involved in bake sales and other fund-raising activities. With their own resources, they work with teachers to provide class parties, school trips, holiday celebrations, and a series of cultural events presented at the school. This past year the PTA sponsored six in-school cultural programs including the American Ballet, the Brass Quartet, and the Pushcart Players. Parents also volunteer as lunch-time aides and attend after school activities with their children.

The Robert Morris School helps children succeed. Most children pass basic skills tests because they learn the basics through a planned curriculum that accentuates humanities, arts, and sciences as academic content. Everyone involved takes an active part in the daily life of the school as, together, they pursue their quest for excellence.

PROFILE OF ROBERT MORRIS SCHOOL #18

District: Elizabeth
County: Union

Date of School Construction: 1930

Enrollment: 310, K-5

Percent Minority: 71.2%

Daily Average Attendance Rate: 94.2%

*District Total Expense Budget Per Pupil[1] 1980-1981: $2,023.00

State Average[2]: 2,300.27

Region Average[3]: 2,411.25

Enrollment Group Average[4]: 2,448.62

County Average[5]: 2,489.23

DFG Average (A)[6]: 1,869.21

Percent of Students Meeting Minimum Basic Skills Standards, 1981:

Math: 100%

Reading: 100%

---

*1980-1981 New Jersey School Boards Association Cost of Education Index

1. District - represents per pupil expenditures for the district
2. State Average - average statewide per pupil expenditures
3. Region Average - Union County is grouped with others in the northeastern region of the State.
4. Enrollment Group - comparison with all districts in the state with enrollments and grade plans similar to that of Elizabeth.
5. County Average - average county per pupil expenditures
6. DFG - District Factor Group - the average per pupil expenditures for districts in the same Socio-Economic grouping.

THOSE WHO MAKE IT WORK

Catherine Alfano
Anne Attardi
Moisei Azrilyan
Ronne Bassman
Jean Brodell
Roslyn Casso
Theresa Casso
Maria Conforti
Rocco Cusmano
Diana Davis
Olga Diaz
Filomena DiBlasio
Dominick DiGiorgio
Catherine Eason
Kathleen Evans
Adriana Galego
Cary Garcia
Maria Gonzales
Sandra Grant
Pamela Heipertz
Isabel Irigarry
Virginia Kopf
Donna Mehedy
Robert S. McIntyre
Patricia Petrucci
Janie Reilly
Sowan Rhie
Moira Roberts
Anne Rothstien
Janice Sheidan
Phyllis Spicer
Peggi Tango
Maria Vega
Carl Venditti
Marcelyne Williams
Kathleen Whelan

Written by:
Dorothy Rubin

Memorial High School
West New York, New Jersey

"An Urban High School with a 'Drop-In' Problem"

What makes news is usually the unusual. In the world of schools, what is unusual is to have an urban school, which is so effective that it attracts "drop-ins," has very few "drop-outs," has a record of high daily attendance, and has students who consistently score high on the Miminum Basic Skills (MBS) tests.

Memorial High School in West New York, New Jersey is one such school, and this profile is an analytical look at this school to try to determine what is "making it work." Of course, success can't be packaged, tied up with a pretty ribbon, and hand-delivered to another school. However, many of the variables that operate at Memorial to make it a successful school can be identified; we can gain insights from them that will help other schools. Probably, the best way to gain these insights is to see the school in action, to meet the people who help make the school work. What follows is a composite of a day's visitation to Memorial High School, as well as some background information on the school.

West New York is surrounded by Union City, Weehawken, North Bergen, and Guttenberg. It is historically an ethnic community and, presently, its largest population is Hispanic. Consequently, Memorial High School has an enrollment of students which is 81 percent Hispanic.

When you approach Memorial High School, the first thing you notice is that it is old. Memorial High School opened its doors in 1928. Typical of many such urban schools, it is now overcrowded. However, the similarity to most other urban and inner-city schools ends there. The building stands proud, looking out at the town through clean, unbroken windows and with unmarred walls. When you enter the building, you are again struck by the absence of any graffiti. In spite of Memorial's age, it is exceptionally clean and exceedingly well-maintained. What strikes you next is the display of trophies that overflows the entrance, prizes that students for generations have won for their athletic and other extracurricular prowess. This seems to set the stage and symbolizes that special something that Memorial High School has that is lacking in many other schools. That something is pride.

As you walk through the halls, you see students, neatly dressed, chatting busily to one another as they hurry to their first class of the day. A few hall monitors are unobtrusively visible. The hall monitors are courteous and seem genuinely interested in aiding those who need it. They approach you in a welcoming and unsuspicious manner. This kind of

manner you soon learn is typical of everyone at Memorial including the students, the teachers, the department chairpersons, the secretarial and clerical staff, and the custodians. For a moment, you feel as though you have been transported to an earlier era; a time when pride and respect of school were the rule rather than the exception. It makes you feel good and you want to learn more about Memorial. Your first stop is the principal's office.

When you phoned to meet with the principal, he answered the phone himself and he told you it would be best to meet with him after nine o'clock because he spends the early morning hours preparing for the day. When you meet the principal, you are struck again with this feeling of pride and love for Memorial. The principal is himself a Memorial graduate and has been both a coach and teacher at the school before becoming the principal. His pride in Memorial is evidenced by the fact that he wears a Memorial High School ring. When you meet this man, he tells you in no uncertain terms that Memorial High School is a good school; it has been a good school, and it is getting better. He tells you that his teachers are experts at making curricular decisions but that he is the administrative expert and believes in doing his job.

At Memorial, everyone from the students to the teachers and the custodian knows what his or her job is. Administrative and guidance staffs as well as department chairpersons receive his strong support. Everyone is treated equally and fairly. He expects a lot and he gets a lot. He expects everyone to do his or her job and he does his. He is not afraid to take a stand and he will stand behind any decision he makes. The principal of Memorial is a very strong and forceful man who has definite beliefs about what will make his school work. He believes in structure and he is task-oriented. He believes that there is a positive relationship between the amount of time that students spend in instruction and their achievement. For example, students with language and/or reading and writing problems will spend up to three hours a day in a special program to attain the skills they need. The principal also reflects the parents' values of being achievement-oriented and embracing a strong work ethnic: you work, you strive, you obey, and you get ahead.

The principal appears to have an excellent grasp of what his role should be and the types of decisions he has to make. He has a good understanding of the students' needs and what his community desires. He backs his teachers because he respects them; they in turn respect him. He feels that his teachers are competent and dedicated.

As you walk in the main hall, your eyes catch another overt indication of this attitude of pride that seems to pervade the school. A sign in the main hallway begins with these

words: "We at Memorial are proud of . . . " As you continue to walk through the building and meet various persons, you, yourself, are caught up in this feeling of excitement and pride. It feels good to be in a school where students want to learn and where teachers can teach. When you talk to teachers, they confirm what you have learned from the principal. The teachers feel that their prime role is to teach and they expect their students to be able to learn according to their ability levels. Those students who need extra help will get extra help from them. Even though some of the students are not academically talented, they are interested in learning and they apply themselves. The attitudes of all the teachers to whom you speak are positive. They are all supportive of the principal, respect and like the students with whom they are working, and are proud to be at Memorial. Except for what is viewed as below average salary scales, teacher morale at Memorial is high. For example, all teachers, including Title I and Compensatory Education staff are treated the same with regard to schedule and salary scale. Also, they are equally involved in decisions. The teachers tell you that they spend a considerable amount of time improving the curriculum and their teaching strategies. When you speak to them, they tell you that they try very hard to do the best they can but they realize that there is always room for improvement. As a result, teachers within departments share information, plan cooperatively, and run their own mini in-service programs in addition to professional days which are available for individual in-service activities.

When you speak to the students, your positive feelings about the school are further reinforced. The students tell you that all students new to Memorial first meet with the principal. At that meeting the principal makes very clear to them what is expected of each student. The principal tells them that they are responsible for their actions and for their classes. A student who does not follow the discipline rules established by the school will be sent home and he or she can only return accompanied by one of his or her parents. The students, as well as the teachers, view their principal as the coach and they see themselves a team members. Good team members follow rules and work for the good of the team. This is not to say that students have no say; they do. But students must be responsible for what they do and say.

Student satisfaction with Memorial is attested to by the fact that each year a few hundred students enroll who are not eligible to attend because they do not live in the district. The students who do this say that they want to come to Memorial because it has a good reputation, strict rules, a good Spanish-speaking faculty, a good and understanding English-speaking faculty, and there is no fear for safety in the school. Unfortunately, the law and overcrowding do not allow this, so many must be sent away. However, until discovered, the out-of-district student, like any other student, is tested immediately and a schedule is prepared

for him or her. The students are in the mainstream of Memorial almost overnight. The school has devised this humane system of placement so that students will be educated while the administration checks their records and analyzes their test data. Time lag is minimal.

Students at Memorial can and do fail. There is no social promotion. Usually, there is a larger percentage of failure during the first quarter of the freshman year because students do not believe they can fail. When students, however, realize that failure is possible and probable if they do not work and when they realize that honest help is available, the students work harder and the percentage of failures becomes quite small. Students know also that if they fail certain courses such as sophomore English, they cannot take sophomore and junior English at the same time. They must make up the course during the next normal school year or go to summer school because the curriculum is a sequential, developmental one. Other options simply do not exist.

At Memorial High School all programs including basic skills, remedial, compensatory, Title I, and others are part of the normal developmental schedule. There are no "pull-out" programs or activities. Sequential development of the students' skills is considered critical. Indeed, all subjects are important and a student should not miss part of a period of any class.

The staff at Memorial tells you that their curriculum is definitely geared to basic skills with a heavy emphasis on reading comprehension and writing. All of the content area examinations include reading comprehension questions. As a result, all the content areas stress the use of reading comprehension to enhance the teaching of their content courses. Because writing is required for graduation, special emphasis is given also to integrate writing into content area courses. Graduates are not only expected to be able to read and speak English but to write coherently as well.

The comprehensive tests which include standardized achievement and criterion-referenced tests are given to students upon their entrance to Memorial and they are used to identify students' weaknesses and strengths. Based on test results, students who are particularly deficient in basic skills are placed in an intensive six-month program to help them overcome their particular deficiencies. At Memorial, the staff emphasizes the learning of English in English as a Second Language classes (ESL). All students who have language difficulties attend the special ESL and language development program, which combines English, reading and ESL instruction.

Every student at Memorial must take five subjects. Each subject has four levels ranging from very low to the honors level. For example, José, a Hispanic student, is currently in honors Spanish but in a low-level English and in a low-level science course. His friend Mike, is in an honors science class, a low-level Spanish class, and a medium-level English class. Maria, who is a limited English-speaking student, takes the following basic schedule in addition to her other subjects : two consecutive periods of high-intensity ESL taught totally in English with a third period some other time during the day, one period of physical education taught in Spanish and a period of math (at an appropriate level) taught in Spanish. As Maria's proficiency in English increases, she will take physical education and math as well as all other subjects in English. The school admits this is a difficult schedule for the slower students who do not have any familiarity with English but they give these students extra assistance. At Memorial, the ESL periods are not given in place of English; therefore, Maria must also take an English class (after she has learned the language), a social studies course and other subjects required for graduation. The staff at Memorial believes that students must be able to read, write, and speak English in order to achieve in school and to find their place in the economic sun. The curricular programs at Memorial reflect these beliefs.

The staff at Memorial recognizes that no high school program can be effective unless they have the cooperation and commitment of their students. As a result they inform students of their progress, and they hold basic skills pep rallies prior to state testing to make clear the purposes of the tests. All teachers you speak to at Memorial emphasize that every lesson they teach has clear objectives and is based on realistic student expectations. Students know what the objectives are and subsequent lessons continue to reinforce former learning.

Memorial High School works because all of the persons are committed to making it work. There are no short cuts and no glib solutions. The formula for Memorial seems to be structure, hard work, dedication, pride, good leadership, competent staff, caring, a realistic and pragmatic view of how students learn, and the ability to make some good decisions and to stick by them. At Memorial, high need seems to equal high attention and high effort. All persons know what the priorities are and maximum time is spent on achieving these priorities.

Memorial has clearly based its program and philosophy on those criteria which are characteristic of effective schools: strong leadership and policies, developmental and coordinated curriculum, committment to high need subjects, knowledgable and dedicated teachers, and strong structure and clear roles for all parties. All these are observable factors supporting the pride found at Memorial High School.

Profile of Memorial High School

West New York

Date of School Construction: 1928

Enrollment: 2,450

Percent Minority: 81% Hispanic

Dropout Rate: 4%

Percent of Graduates Going to College: 56%

Percent of Graduates Going to Other Post-Secondary Schools: 23%

Percent of Graduates Going into Government Service: 3%

Percent of Graduates Going into Employment: 13%

Percent of Graduates Going into Homemaking: 2%

Percent of Graduates Unemployed: 2%

Percent of Graduates Unknown: 1%

Daily Average Absentee Rate: 9%

District Total Expense Budget Per Pupil 1980-81: $2,318

State Average: 2,666

Region Average: 2,800

Enrollment Group Averages: 2,535

County Average: 2,651

DFG Average (A): 2,536 (Net)

Percent of Students Meeting MBS Standards in 1981:

Math: 91.8%

Reading: 91.0%

THOSE WHO MAKE IT WORK

Memorial High School

West New York

New Jersey

Joseph Abbadessa
Frances Addas
Les Adler
Mark Aiello
Martha Aleman
Joseph Amara
Harry S. Apovian

Jill Ashkenazi
Lucille Astrella
Frank Augustine
Fred H. Ballard
Maria Barbanera
Lisa Baron
Marie Bedaro

Martin Bendian
Mayra Berkes
Mercedes Bernal-Rueca
Anthony Bocchieri
John Brunner
Peter Cafasso
William Caiazza

Frank Campo
Thomas G. Cannito
Manuel Castro
Rosa Castro
Linda Catanzaro
Robert Catanzaro
Lillian Cave
Peggy Cave
Peggy Cave
John Calentano
Alizan Chomsky
Zephyr Chomsky
Ernest Ciardi
Stephen Clarke
Frank J. Cocuzza

Susan Colacurcio
Jeanne Colford
Anthony Corbisiero
Michael Cordasco
Eileen Corrigan
Jose J. Costal
Joseph N. Coviello

Arthur Crabtree
Lee Cross
Kitty Culnane
James J. Cuviello
Aldo E. Dagila
Diana Deer
Kathy DeKranis
Nita DelRio

Louis DeNoia
Josephine DePasquale
Dennis DeSocio
Tom DeSocio
Nelida Diaz
Oscar Diaz
Daniel DiSanti

James DiStefano
Mildred Dockstader
Edwin Donnelly
Joseph F. Dorso
Kelly Doyle
William Endress
Anthony Ferrainolo

Audrey Ferrante
Milton Fialkoff
Terry Foley
Michael Gambuzza
Carlos Garcia
James Gilligan
Edith Thor Giordan

Sharon Golub
Zoila C. Gonzalez
Vartkess Gopoian
Tom Grabowski
Anthony Grasso
Adrienne Groves
Joseph A. Guglielmo

Joan E. Gulick
Leonardo E. Gutierrez
Lourdes Gutierrez
Howard Hillwig
Marge Hillwig
Arlene Hess
Arden Hetson

Ray Iacovelli
Anthony J. Ianni
Lois Jackson
Juan Jimenez
Anastasia Kaplaneris
Emine Kayaalp
William Kennedy

Robert Kirchner
Arthur Kogge
Adrienne Kole
T. Craig Kuzirian
Patricia LaCarrubba
Robert Lavine
Janet Lewis
Mirnia Linares

Gerald Loschiavo
Richard Loschiavo
William Loschiavo
Lynn Maoli
Paul F. Madison
Cathy Maffei-Ehrlich
Rich Maiorana

Marie R. Maita
Lois Mannion
Louis F. Marchesani
Magaly Matos
Jennie L. Mercer
Patrick McCarthy
Jack McDonald

Virginia McGall
Paul Meli
Joyce Melilli
George Meyer
Donna Mirabelli
Maria L. Meranda
Constance Muir

Edith Mahmias
Maria Negron
Faith Nesti
Joan Netzke
Charles O'Hanlon
Dorothy O'Hanlon
Lorraine Oliveri

David Osnowitz
Gene A. Pagnozzi
Marian Papish
Louis Pappalardo
Lucia Passante
Lucy Pavin
Robert Peiletreau

John J. Perlas
Madlyn Phelan
Roslyn Pizzichillo
Cora Presutti
Joseph Prezioso
Catherine M. Quinn
Leon Raphael

Francesn Reynolds
Francis Riccardi
Amada Rivelo
Juan Rivelo
Maricela Roche
Roberto Rodriguez
Henry Rogien

Ricky Romano
Marsha Rosen
Angelina Rotella
Estelle Rubano
Florence Ryan
Carmen T. Saavedra
Bruce Sabatini

Francesco Sabetta
June Sain
Barbara Santillo
Joseph Santos
William Sarnowski
Harold Saylor
Fred Schiller

Geraldine Schmidt
Peter Schwartz
Anita Marie Sesta
Fred Sheim
Robin Sherman
Therese Shenton-Lahman
Clarice Silverstein

Vincent Silvestri
Tom Simione
Mathew Sinisi
Albio Sires
Angela Spano
Inga Spitzbard
Geraldine Stangl

John Stark
Jose M. Suarez
Charles Swensan
Jeffery A. Taraio
Joseph Tedesco
Pauline Tobar
Anne Tringali

Helen Trombetta
Salvatore Trombetta
Maria C. Tugorez
Jack Valero
Joseph Valicenti
Anna Verdino
Nelly Villaverde

Margaret Wellman
John Wengerter
Willa White
Robert S. Wilson
Anthony Yankovich
Gary Zimmerman
Mitchell Znak

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

The primary goal of the public schools of New Jersey is to ensure that all youngsters in New Jersey develop the skills necessary to "function politically, economically and socially in our society." It is my firm conviction that all children, with the possible exception of those with severe disabilities, can master the basic skills and leave school prepared to cope with the demands of adulthood. I believe this is a feasible goal and we are in the process of achieving it. This goal is the motivation behind our continuing efforts to improve educational practice and to ensure equal opportunity for all children.

As educators, it is essential that we not lose sight of this goal or be deterred by convenient arguments that factors beyond our control determine what and how much children learn. While some social scientists, unfortunately, have succeeded in pursuading much of the public and many in the educational profession that schools cannot make a significant difference in the lives of children, there is a growing body of research that supports the contention that good schools can and do make a difference. We must make effective use of this knowledge about effective schools in our efforts to improve education in New Jersey.

The T & E process has enabled us to identify the schools with severe problems and to focus our efforts on remediation. The T & E process has also allowed us to identify the many highly successful schools whose characteristics are similar to those having severe problems in the state.

It is our hope that by sharing information with educators concerning some of these successful schools that pupils throughout the state will benefit.

The first schools selected for this series are urban schools with a history of high achievement in basic skills. While the schools were selected based on basic skills performance, I am sure that you will come to share my view that these schools are concerned with the total educational experience.

Future issues in the series will focus on school achievements in areas other than basic skills.

Written by:
Daniel W. Kunz

Harry L. Bain Elementary School
West New York, New Jersey

"They Help Me . . . I Want to be Here"

"They help me . . . I want to be here," volunteered a student when asked why he and his classmates seemed so excited. The child was referring to the Harry L. Bain Elementary School and its teachers. This well-kept building in West New York, dedicated in 1916, seemed almost revered by the children playing outside. Other students voluntarily joined in offering praise. "The teachers help us," "They work us hard," and "They like us" were typical replies. This partially tells the story of a successful urban school.

What are the reasons for their view of this school? Surely, pride of ownership is one thing their responses reflect. That is why this school was visited, to find out the reasons why it "works," why it is successful, and what we can learn from its success.

The town of West New York is unquestionably urban. Eight percent of the school population is of Hispanic origin. The Harry L. Bain School community is composed predominately of single parent families and extended families who live in moderate, row-type housing in this commercial/industrial area of the city. The surrounding towns also reflect an urban environment.

The building dates from an era when boys and girls had separate entrances. Although antiquated by present standards, the age of the building is not apparent in its condition nor in the instructional program that is found inside. Parents and their children frequently walk to school together, a somewhat forgotten tradition. The kids and their parents all seem comfortable with this activity. Equally comfortable are the owners of the local candy store. They like the kids and that fondness is returned. "Study hard," "learn a lot" or "learn in school today" frequently is the encouragement given by the store owners to the children. As the children leave the store they are aided by safety patrols, who appear to take their job seriously.

Orderly, organized, and structured all are words that come to mind as one enters the main entrance of the building. More than 800 students and teachers have cultivated an atmosphere of warmth and activity that can be sensed while walking through the building. It is easy to see why kids want to be here and why parents want them to be. The atmosphere of the school feels good to those who enter it, but that's not enough to make it successful.

Teachers can be found in their classrooms or working together on projects. They share information and ideas in order to meet each child's needs. A strong rapport exists

among the faculty and with the students, even though only a few teachers are bilingual. Many teachers are former West New York students, and in some cases, their children have also attended public schools in this town. A sense of pride and a strong desire to maintain high standards are the norm. Bulletin boards and gaily decorated classrooms invite one to look around and watch the activities. Teachers have an air of confidence. Teacher longevity of service is the norm rather than the exception.

An exciting informal communication system between professional staff has resulted in a tremendous sharing of information on curriculum needs, student achievement, parental problems, and teaching strategies. This close working relationship permits movement of pupils between groups and classrooms by mutual consent of the teachers rather than by formal requests for transfer.

Ineffective teaching methods or curriculum are found quickly and all teachers offer suggestions, time, and effort to correct them. The best possible situation is always sought for the child regardless of what that means in terms of individual teacher work load. The district's union president, a teacher in Bain Elementary School, also holds the philosophy that a child's education always should come first. All people in the school do what is expected, and more. What is unusual is that the expected is far above the quality and quantity of service found in many schools today. What fault can one find with good teachers who care?

While walking through the building one notices a parent leaving the principal's office. What infraction necessitated a visit by a working parent? Severe truancy? Foul language? Vandalism? Actually, it was none of the above. The child was simply not doing his work as expected. Failure to try, failure to work, or becoming lax are reasons enough to summon a parent. A student's mind and the teacher's time are both too valuable to waste. Although discipline problems do exist, a strict policy helps reduce these instances. The word is out among the students—don't goof off! The faculty works hard and in return the students work hard. "They help me . . . I want to be here."

Teachers, nearly a quarter of whom have advanced degrees in reading, modify the curriculum and classroom structure to accommodate individual needs. They arrive in the building early in the morning and frequently work through lunch and free time. The teachers can be compared to the hub of a wheel. The wheel spokes and the bands that hold the wheel together are the curriculum and leadership in the building. These will be examined next.

How do the kids spend their day at Bain School? The day is well-structured but not regimented. Although ESL/Bilingual teachers have less preparation time than other teachers, they are able to devise new and interesting activities for the students in the ESL/Bilingual classes. In these classes, there is a strong emphasis on making the transition to English. The multi-age grouping in these classes, covering grades one through eight, helps build a camaraderie among students at various grade and ability levels. This grouping method also encourages the older or more able student to help the newer or younger student and increases self-respect for all. Even with intensive work, a child usually spends two years in a self-contained ESL/ Bilingual class before he or she is proficient enough to work in a regular classroom. The children from the ESL/Bilingual program participate in the physical education, art, and music classes with students from the English-only classrooms.

A child who is English-proficient may be placed in any of four classrooms at each grade level. Students again are able to learn from each other since these classes are composed of a mixture of student abilities within a reasonable range. Reading, a part of all activities in the school, is emphasized with at least one hour per day in cross-classroom reading groups. The lower grades spend at least one half hour more in similar activities. For those students still identified as basic skills deficient or who have a unique language problem, an additional half hour is available in both math and reading on a tutorial basis. However, fewer than 10 students are involved in this type of activitiy. Seldom does one find schools where the students wish to attend tutorial sessions. This is a tribute to the tutorial teacher who is also a strong instructional force in the building. Her suggestions are well-received by other teachers and her enthusiasm and caring for the students' achievement pervades the school's atmosphere. She holds high expectations for all students. Interestingly, both she and her children were West New York students.

Formal testing is used for diagnosis and remediation, not for assigning labels. All kids are accommodated within the regular classroom curriculum and teaching is directed at the weakness found by assessment. Identifying the weak skills and spending considerable time teaching those skills is the simple, effective, and reasonable strategy.

A curriculum for gifted and talented students is an active part of the school program, and creative and developmental writing has a firm foothold in all classrooms. An exciting peer tutoring program that improves student self-respect and pride and focuses on basic skills is being developed. This is an outstanding combination of benefits by anyone's estimation. Even students in kindergarten pursue an active basic skills program. Full time programs in art, music, and physical education provide a full range of interesting activities for the students. A science

teacher is available for four full days a week to help students understand why stars twinkle, balls bounce, and electricity stings. In addition, home economics and industrial arts classes are also provided for students in the upper grades. Activities in these curricular areas are also planned as part of regular classroom programs. Students may continue to answer questions growing out of their natural inquisitiveness by spending time in the library—an overcrowded facility housing exciting, active programs and activities for all. The librarian and teachers work closely to ensure that the students' time is well spent. It is a pleasure to enter a library filled with the noise of excited learning. The library, like the school, emphasizes active learning.

Rewards are built into the system. Kids are praised for making progress and they receive academic awards for their efforts. Not only are the best students rewarded, but also those whose efforts are great, but progress small. Students in tutorial programs, as well as the safety patrols, are treated to a "McDonald's Day." These are small but meaningful ways of recognizing student efforts. Striving is rewarded but laziness and disinterest are not. Achievement and effort equal promotion. Only five administrative (social) promotions occurred last year.

Everyone in the Harry L. Bain School sets high standards and works toward them. This is particularly true of the administration and the senior instructional personnel. The prior principal built a strong base for the curriculum, and the current principal, also a former resident of West New York and teacher in the system, continued in this tradition. He believes that "everyone, both teachers and students, must produce. The expectation is to produce." He does not have a formal written policy on basic skills but the heavy emphasis on mathematics and on reading, in which he has a degree, is evident throughout the curriculum. Supporting his teachers is a major responsibility. He promotes curriculum development as the instructional leader while an assistant primarily deals with administrative and disciplinary matters. He sets and maintains clear roles for all groups: teachers teach, parents support learning, and administrators manage and supervise. Although teachers are involved in decision-making and provide expertise regarding curriculum, the principal is the primary decision-maker in the building. He makes a decision; he lives with it.

The principal realizes that reading is critical to all other activities. By supervising teachers he focuses on improving the reading skills of students. Specific suggestions and concrete examples are given in each evaluation and the teacher must show that the suggestion was used. The principal's reading background, assistance by key instructional personnel, and the concern of a reading-oriented faculty are central to the school's success.

Where do the parents fit in? It would seem that the parents must somehow be involved in the education of their children. They are. They support the teachers but understand that their major role is in the home. A good rapport has been developed between the school and parents. For example, to ensure that parents know about school activities, all notices and reports are sent home in Spanish and English. Attendance at PTA meetings is small but those who do attend are often taught how to make and use learning aides for their children. This is a practical use of precious time.

It's a pleasure to visit a school which is well organized, clear about its tasks and about how to accomplish them, and has a staff that believes the school is good and getting better. The school has clear curriculum goals and achieves them through a structured sequence of developmental courses. All comments by teachers and administrators are positive and enthusiastic about the students and the school. Nearly everyone seems to enjoy being there, particularly the students. The school is good and is getting better!

Profile of Harry L. Bain Elementary School

West New York

Date of School Construction: 1916

Enrollment: 836

Percent Minority: 80% Hispanic

Daily Average Absentee Rate: 3%

District Total Expense Budget Per Pupil 1980-81:	$2,318
State Average:	2,666
Region Average	2,800
Enrollment Group Averages:	2,535
County Average:	2,651
DFG Average (A):	2,536 (Net)

Percent of Students Meeting MBS Standards in 1981:

Math:	95.1%
Reading:	95.7%

THOSE WHO MAKE IT WORK

Harry L. Bain Elementary School

West New York

New Jersey

Judy Ambrosio
Gilda Arakel
Anthony Bertone
Dennis Brown
Joseph Burnell
Marilyn Canale
Nancy Cannito

Marion Renner-Casper
Michael Castino
Theresa Cerullo
Eleanor Chalk
Nori Colas
Carmela Cordasco
Rosemary del Prado

Darlyn Eckert
Susan Ehrlich
Carol Fabrikant
Matthew Favaro
Gail Fisher
Valerie Gant
Sharon Golub

Patricia Grabarits
William Grafe
Kevin Grasser
Marie Gribbens
Debra Guyre
Mary Hughes
Kathleen Hudson

Mili Hudson
Jeanette Iann
Peter Jackman
Muriel Johnson
Frances Kavanagh
Edward Langan
Beverly Lazzara

Barbara Lentini
Olga Lichtenberg
Karen Lieberman
Kathleen MacKay
Donna Massa
Michele Meliti
Rita Mendez

Suzanne Murphy
Francisca Pages
Margaret Petersen
Agatha Quinn
Onil Rodriguez
Kathy Rooney
Valerie Rosalsky

Sherilyn Rosenberg
Carol Rovento
James Schmidt
Victor Scocco
Irene Sisserson
William Tarallo
Claire Tunick

Miriam Untoria
Mary Valdes
Lois VanZanten
Robert VanZenten
Donna Vinciquerra
Harriet Wright
Marion Zinzi